

COUNTY OF YORK

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 7, 2002 (BOS Mtg. 2/19/02)

TO: York County Board of Supervisors

FROM: James O. McReynolds, County Administrator

SUBJECT: Application No. UP-587-02, Ranger Rick's Driving Range

ISSUE

This application requests a Special Use Permit, pursuant to Section 24.1-306 (category 9, No.8 and No. 9) of the Zoning Ordinance to authorize the establishment of a golf driving range, miniature golf, and batting cages on an 11.3-acre portion of a 100.5-acre parcel located at 301 Lightfoot Road. The property is owned by the Williamsburg Pottery Factory and will be leased to the applicant. The property is zoned EO (Economic Opportunity) and is further identified as Assessor's Parcel No. 2-17.

DESCRIPTION

- Property Owner: Williamsburg Pottery, Inc.
- Location: 301 Lightfoot Road; north side of Lightfoot Road, approximately 1,000 feet east of its intersection with Richmond Road (Route 60)
- Area: 11.3 acres
- Frontage: Approximately 400' on Lightfoot Road
- Utilities: Public water; sanitary sewer available
- Topography: Mostly flat
- 2015 Land Use Map Designation: Economic Opportunity
- Zoning Classification: EO – Economic Opportunity
- Existing Development: None
- Surrounding Development:
 - North: Undeveloped property; James City County beyond
 - East: Undeveloped property
 - South: Lightfoot Road (Route F-137); single-family detached homes beyond
 - West: Williamsburg Pottery Factory
- Proposed Development: Golf driving range, miniature golf, and batting cages

CONSIDERATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

1. The applicant plans to lease the subject property from the current owner, Williamsburg Pottery Factory, Inc., to construct a golf driving range, a miniature golf course, and batting cages on an eleven-acre portion of a 100-acre parcel located on the north side of Lightfoot Road approximately 1,000 feet east of Richmond Road (Route 60). The property is zoned EO (Economic Opportunity). The Comprehensive Plan designates this property for Economic Opportunity uses to provide for commercial and tourist-oriented development. The proposed outdoor recreational facility will provide additional entertainment opportunities oriented to the large tourist population visiting the Historic Triangle.
2. The proposed leased portion of the subject parcel is rectangular in shape and appears well suited for a golf driving range and the other proposed facilities. If approved, the driving range would occupy the rear two-thirds of the property (approximately 300 yards) while the miniature golf and batting cage would be located along the front portion of the parcel parallel to Lightfoot Road. Concept drawings of the course provided by the applicant depict favorable views from Lightfoot Road. There will be little topographical relief on the course, which will help limit its visibility from Lightfoot Road (see attached plan). The driving range will also have a small clubhouse that, in addition to serving as the office, will offer light snacks for patrons.
3. The Zoning Ordinance sets forth performance standards regarding this type of proposal. Sec. 24.1-458. *Standards for miniature golf, waterslide, skateboard rink, baseball hitting range, golf driving range, and other outdoor commercial amusements* states:

“(a) No structure except privacy or containment fences or sound baffles used as a part of miniature golf, waterslide, skateboard rink, baseball hitting range, golf driving range, or other outdoor commercial amusements shall be located closer than five hundred feet (500') [150m] to a residential property line or closer than one hundred feet (100') [30m] to any other property line except where a lesser dimension is approved by the Board of Supervisors in conjunction with the consideration of a special use permit application (emphasis added).

(b) Noise shall be contained on the site through the use of architectural and landscape means.”

Because all surrounding property is zoned for Economic Opportunity uses, only the one hundred foot (100') separation buffer will apply to the proposal. However, as noted in the Ordinance, the Board of Supervisors may reduce this requirement in consideration of a specific request. When this application was considered by the Planning Commission, the applicant had proposed that the buffer width be reduced to fifty (50) feet along the proposed lease lines, which both the staff and the Commission thought was reasonable given the fact that all the surrounding property is undeveloped. Nevertheless, the conditions recommended by staff and supported by the Commission included a requirement that the 50-foot buffer strip also be

landscaped with a row of evergreen trees (see Planning Commission minutes excerpt – Condition No. 3).

Since the Planning Commission meeting, the applicant has submitted a request that the buffer width be reduced to twenty-five (25) feet and that, with the exception of the portion adjoining the Pettitt property, the buffer not be required to be landscaped until development of the adjoining property is actually underway. This proposal is set forth in the attached letter dated January 25, 2002, from M. Scott Hawkins, President of the Williamsburg Pottery Factory, Inc. In addition, a letter has been received from Mr. Patrick Pettitt indicating that the Pettitt family is "...satisfied that the proposed 25-foot planted buffer has been adequately designed to prevent golf balls from entering onto [their adjoining] property."

Clearly, if the adjoining property were developed, or if it were not owned by the Pottery, this arrangement would not be appropriate and would not be sufficient to ensure safety and compatibility. However, based on these two communications, and recognizing the fact that the Pottery controls all the adjoining property (with the exception of the Pettitt parcel) and can accommodate the 25-foot wide buffer, or even a greater width, in the marketing and site planning for that property if future development is proposed, I am of the opinion that the revised proposal is generally appropriate. However, I do believe that a 50-foot buffer should be provided between the driving range and any adjacent building or parking area developed in the future. Accordingly, Condition No. 3 in proposed Resolution No. R02-15 has been revised from that initially recommended by staff and the Commission to reflect this revised buffering proposal.

4. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) did not offer any comments on this application. However, if there are concerns from VDOT, they will be addressed during the site plan review process. As indicated in the conceptual plan submitted by the applicant, there will be one ingress/egress to the site with access to Lightfoot Road. Lightfoot Road has an "A" LOS (Level of Service) rating based on current traffic counts. Because of the available capacity, Lightfoot Road will not be adversely affected by the development. The applicant has submitted a traffic impact analysis that concludes that no further changes to the roadway are necessary to accommodate the anticipated traffic generated by the proposal. However according to the study, the peak hour traffic count (peak generator) is very close to warranting a right turn taper. Therefore as a prudent safety measure in consideration of this proposal and the potential for future development in the surrounding area, a condition has been included in the proposed resolution that requires the applicant to construct a right turn taper southbound on Lightfoot Road. The right turn taper will facilitate the traffic flow on Lightfoot Road and ease potential traffic disruptions. The applicant will still be responsible for any additional improvements required by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).
5. Because the Board adopted new standards for the lighting of commercial developments, obtrusive night lighting will not be an issue with this application. All

lighting on the site will be required to comply with the standards recommended by the Illumination Engineering Society of North America (IESNA).

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission considered this application at its regular meeting on January 9, 2002, and, subsequent to conducting a public hearing at which only the applicant and his agent spoke, voted 7:0 to recommend approval.

RECOMMENDATION

The Lightfoot Road/Route 199 area has experienced significant growth in the recent past and this will likely continue. Much of this growth has been tourist-related, including hotel and timeshare construction. Recreational facilities such as this cater to the tourist population and will provide an opportunity for visitors to remain in the County for their entertainment. In addition, the proposal's proximity to Richmond Road (Route 60) will further benefit the tourist-related industry in the Williamsburg area. Lastly, the adjacent roadways will not be adversely affected by the proposed course, and there will be no significant traffic concerns. Therefore, based on the considerations and conclusions outlined above, I recommend that the Board approve this application subject to the conditions contained in proposed Resolution R02-15, which, as noted, includes the revised proposal concerning the perimeter buffering.

Carter/3337
Attachments

- Excerpts of Planning Commission minutes of January 9, 2002
- Zoning Map
- Site Map
- Letter from M. Scott Hawkins dated January 25, 2002
- Letter from Patrick Pettitt, dated January 23, 2002
- Ranger Rick's proposed site layout
- Proposed Resolution No. R02-15